

## **Notes from Final Discussion Session:**

### **Topic 1: Training, support, and customer service**

#### Priorities included:

- Consistent support is needed in all Regions. States need a champion in every region to conduct visits, help with updates, and provide some hands-on training.
- A “road map” for STORET implementation would help people know what kinds of services and technical information are available. This could include access to the listserver or tips for technical project planning.
- Expand “train the trainer” concept to help offset state budget shortfalls. Groups could send one person to get the EPA training and tools, then train others at the state and local level.

#### Comments:

- Many aspects of the current training are working, but the challenge is that people do not know they are available, so never ask for help.
- People want some face-to-face training from EPA HQ or Regions. Topics include: how to input files, tips for new users, how to conduct updates, how to put results from your lab into STORET (e.g., making them compatible with SIM), how all pieces fit together, how data are supposed to flow.
- EPA could provide contact information for the Regional STORET coordinators.
- Please note that some of this requested information is available on EPA’s STORET Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/storet/>

### **Topic 2: Functionality for retrieval and reporting**

#### Priorities included:

- Providing GIS capabilities on the front end for the average user, not just for professionals. EPA could explicitly state from which databases the data are coming. This could be more of a geographical selection tool to pick stations.
- Warehouse needs interactive functionality (e.g., users should be able to pick and choose and go back, as opposed to having to go find.).
- The metadata retrieval system needs improvement. EPA could provide two search screens (a simple and a complex one) or research what metadata are actually being used.
- Preformatted reports should be available as text files.

#### Comments:

- Everybody wants customized reports, so focus on getting data into a useable format.
- Put Lee’s “10-steps for getting data from warehouse to Excel” document on the website.
- Provide guidance on organization names.

### **Topic 3: Data integration**

Priorities included:

- Maintain shared metadata (e.g., parameter codes, characteristics, aliases, units, methods) at the EPA Office of Environmental Information (OEI) level. This requires active and timely data stewardship (e.g., coordination between levels).
- Define and use data standards. These are important for the use and reuse of data and for data sharing. For example, some optional fields (e.g., “unknown” or “other”) are commonly used, but do not provide useful information.
- EPA should improve the ability to retrieve data across boundaries (e.g., political, organizational, geographic). This requires standards and methods for sharing.
- EPA should facilitate the assurance of data integrity. This requires better communication between the data user and the owner. Potential users need to be assured that data owners can and will make corrections.

### **Topic 4: Functionality for data entry**

Priorities included:

- Changes to SIM.
  - Include a global find-and-replace function for editing values or changing data from preliminary to final.
  - Continue developing WebSIM and have EPA or some other national group pay for hosting.
  - Add the ability to sort imports and search migration ID.
  - Provide a standard form for metadata.
  - Use consistency in naming.
  - Provide the documentation for SIM.
  - Provide better definitions of characteristics.
- Re-design the STORET front end.
  - Make it more windows-like.
  - Provide an Access application that can export data.
  - Display all characteristics on one screen.
  - Use XML for export/import actions.
- Other.
  - Better integrate SIM and STORET.
  - Provide users the ability, and option, to integrate STORET and SIM.
  - Provide some flexibility for species and metrics.

Comments:

- It would be helpful to have different models of how to configure STORET, along with the benefits and ramifications of different configurations. Also, guidance on how to put data together and/or pre-formatted templates would help.